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SUMMER MEETINGS

REGENTS' CONVOCATION—NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

First of all the charms of the teachers' profession has always been the long vacation. Time was when we all thought it a very excellent thing, but really didn't know what to do with it. Isolated individuals solved the problem each his own way. Some worked in the garden; others went fishing; others still read some of the books they had paid for during the working months of the year. It took two months to learn how to live in vacation, and then vacation was done. Now, however, the problem is solved for us. We are to go to the Regents' Convocation, the State Teachers' Association, the National Educational Association, the American Institute of Instruction, the School of Ethics, the American Philological Society (if we can), the Summer Meeting for University Extension, spend six weeks in any one of twenty good or thirty more pretty good summer schools studying or lecturing, and devote the two or three days that remain to concentrated repose at a rest cure. Only the teacher of great natural obstinacy can now escape this sort of vacation.

THE REGENTS' CONVOCATION

This is nearly always good. It has a good reputation and does not live on it. Holding the meeting in the splendid capitol, and in the rich senate chamber of that capitol in itself gives dignity to the gathering. Coming together here, in one compact body, we feel that we are the staple article. Those meetings where a few fragments of us come together at various places unconsciously make us feel like an assortment of job lots. The convocation is not poor in features that touch the imagination. The stately chamber, the always interesting assembly, the procession of Regents at the opening, headed by the gracious chancellor in cap and gown, the charm of a past and a history, these and more are other-worldly, no doubt, but we love them. This year the meeting was peculiarly interesting by reason of the fact that the Constitutional Convention was in session just across the court, in the

Assembly chamber. We went and looked at the convention, and the convention came in and looked at us. Each thought well of the other, and all were edified.

WHO WERE THERE

There are a good many colleges in New York. At no one time in the three days' meeting was there more than one New York college president in attendance. The total of those who caught a glimpse of the proceedings in the three days was three. These doubtless unavoidable absences were much regretted. On the other hand there were present many representatives of colleges outside the State and a great body of secondary school principals teachers. They led the meeting, gave it its tone, learned to and know each other. And yet presently our New York colleges will perhaps be complaining that academic graduates from this State are going to other states for their college training. Conspicuous in many of the meetings, and always listened to with interest and respect, were Presidents Adams of Wisconsin, Hall of Clark, Baker of Colorado, and Canfield of Nebraska. Many other western college presidents sent letters and telegrams of regret. They would have been there but for Debs.

THE DISCUSSIONS

There were the usual reports. That on Examinations was of greatest significance. It may well be questioned whether anywhere in the world there now exists a more perfect examining machine than that controlled by the Regents of the U. S. N. Y. What it had to say about examinations was, therefore, especially worth hearing. And it had to say that its examinations were more flourishing than ever before, which we knew. It gave clear testimony, moreover, that no substitute for examinations had been devised, or in all human foresight ever would be. The thing to do is to make examinations as good as possible, and to remove the objectionable features as far as possible. We missed the scholarly report on the World's Recent Progress in Education, given last year by Principal Russell. This feature ought to be revived.

A most laudable attempt had been made in preparing the programme to concentrate the meeting on two foremost topics: the

Relation of the State to Higher Education, and the Report of the Committee of Ten. The discussion on the first topic was introduced by an able paper by ex-Senator Edward. This discussion had dramatic interest from the fact that the Constitutional Convention was almost certain to determine, and was then engaged in determining what this relation should be in New York. Many members of the convention listened to the discussion. Representatives of the Department of Public Instruction were also in attendance. They got cold comfort. Finally, on motion of Principal King the convocation voted to memorialize the convention to place the appointment of the Superintendent of Public Instruction in the hands of the Regents, which at this writing the convention seems not likely to do. "Do you expect to educate politics out of existence?" one of the delegates asked.

"Giving it to the Committee of Ten" has been a popular recreation for the past six months. The convocation gave it to them all day Friday. This sounds like concentration; but it is not difficult to discuss any conceivable question of ever so remote kinship to education and base the discussion on the Report of the Committee of Ten. Superintendent Kennedy introduced the discussion in an exhaustive paper, notable for its excellent style. Superintendent Emerson followed in a paper from which he read only extracts. These convinced us that we wanted the whole paper. Principal Robinson, a member of the Committee, made a notable criticism of the Report from the point of view of the large mixed school, the substance of which has already appeared in the SCHOOL REVIEW for June. We deem Principal Robinson's criticisms of vital importance, for they point out a larger danger for the Report than any other. The Report is aiming at the German "Einheitschule," uniformity in all schools of secondary grade, to be followed necessarily by uniformity in grammar, and then in primary, grades. This is a new warfare for us, but it has been fighting long in Germany and Scandinavia. Principal Robinson claims that the Report, perhaps through ignorance of real conditions, does not make enough of the difficulties of introducing the uniform programme into all sorts of schools of academic grade. We need not be surprised if this effort for uniformity shall lead to a reaction when the fact will be clearly recognized that the "maid-of-all-work" school is impracticable in

this country, as it has been declared to be in Germany. The differentiation of the high school and not its "uniformification" may be after all the coming movement in higher education.

GENERAL NOTES

The convocation is a unique gathering. It offers the best opportunity in the world for the harmonious adjustment of relations between high schools and colleges, yet nowhere are these relations much worse adjusted than in New York. Michigan and other western states, with no such organization ready at hand, have established the famous educational ladder with one end in the gutter and the other in a university degree. Perhaps because in New York the gutter end has not been amenable, the ladder has not been planted. But there might and ought at least to be better fire escapes from the second story to the top. As for criticism, first and foremost sin was the lack of all opportunity for discussion. We have heard the cry "shorten and enrich the programmes" of the grammar schools. What a motto for next convocation! Discussion keeps a meeting alive as does nothing else. For, while only a few will actually take part in the discussion, every person in the audience feels that he or she is potentially liable to be drawn into it. The result of this uneasy feeling is anxious and absorbed attention. There was no proper understanding as to time. Readers who should have had twenty minutes were allowed to take an hour. Speakers who supposed they had twenty minutes were shut off short with ten, in one case at least very unfortunately. There was lack of educational leadership. We should like to know who the real leaders in education are in the State of New York. At least we should like to have them demonstrate this leadership in the great educational gathering of the State for the year. Probably only wider opportunity for discussion would give such leadership a chance to appear. Probably, too, if there were discussion, most of those who might be leaders would be found privately lamenting in hotel corridors the lack of vigorous thought on the floor of the convocation. It is easier to criticise than to act.

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

This is too big to be described. There were four or five thousand teachers present, and everybody said as many more

were kept away by the strike. There were many good, a few notably good, papers and addresses. The size of a meeting does not, however, determine its quality. It was a reasonably good looking, thoroughly self-respecting crowd, composed largely of women, with the exception of its officers, and it violated none of the respectability rules of Asbury Park. Most of the "great names" of the general programme failed to appear. Doubtless there were good reasons why Governor Werts and Secretary Hoke Smith and others who might be mentioned first agreed to be present and then telegraphed regrets. Certain it is that they disappointed many thousands of excellent people. Persons however great ought not to accept such invitations lightly. The multiplication of departments and the seemingly fixed number of hours in a day resulted in too crowded a programme. Of course many thousands of the many thousands in attendance made no attempt to attend meetings all day. Still it is unfortunate, even though there be no remedy, that all the department meetings must conflict, for there are not a few who want badly to be in from two to four places at once. In Chicago the arrangement was ideal, all the meetings in one building. One could then shop around without loss of time and hear the most interesting papers in several departments. At Asbury Park the afternoon meetings were so separated that fashionable calling was impracticable. It is to be hoped that next year all meetings may be, if not in one building, at least very close together. The educational exhibit of publishers and others was in a separate building, and formed one of the most valuable features of the meeting. We hope that hereafter better provision may be made for this exhibition, and that it may be more nearly complete. The election of Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler as president met with universal and hearty approval. We wish that the place for the next meeting had been definitely selected before the session broke up. Denver was the choice of the majority. It is a good choice. But in our opinion it is very unfortunate to leave the fixing of the place of meeting in the air. It makes a great difference in arranging programmes. Men will go to one place and not to another, and hesitate to agree to go until they know where they are to go. And programmes to be good must be taken in hand early.

THE GENERAL MEETINGS

The general meetings in the auditorium morning and evening were always impressive. The N. E. A. ought, however, to appoint special police to eject chronic whisperers promptly and vigorously from its meetings. Their thoughtless and selfish activity in the general meetings was outrageous, despite President Lane's vigorous efforts to suppress them. The discussion on the Report of the Committee of Ten was introduced by Dr. Mackenzie in an admirable paper on "The Feasibility of Modifying the Programmes of the Elementary and Secondary Schools to Meet the Suggestions in the Report." The progress thus far made and our present position were clearly indicated. This, and President Baker's paper before the National Council were the two most important contributions to the discussion of the Report. President Baker made an exhaustive study of the Report, presenting concisely the points he should favor and those he should question. This summary we are able through his courtesy to give, and regret only that want of space prevents our publishing his paper in full.

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

After a careful review of the work of our committee, I venture to make a formal list of opinions presented, most of which I think should be heartily indorsed, reserving till later the discussion of a few of them.

1. That work in many secondary school studies should be begun earlier.
2. That each subject should be made to help every other, as, for example, history should contribute to the study of English, and natural history should be correlated with language, drawing, literature, and geography.
3. That every subject should be taught in the same way, whether in preparation for college or as part of a finishing course.
4. That more highly trained teachers are needed, especially for subjects that are receiving increased attention, as the various sciences and history.
5. That in all scientific subjects laboratory work should be extended and improved.

6. That for some studies special instructors should be employed to guide the work of teachers in elementary and secondary schools.

7. That all pupils should pursue a given subject in the same way and to the same extent as long as they study it at all.

8. That every study should be made a serious subject of instruction, and should cultivate the pupil's powers of observation, memory, expression, and reasoning.

9. That the choice between the classical course and the Latin-scientific course should be postponed as long as possible, until the taste and power of the pupil have been tested, and he has been able to determine his future aim.

10. That twenty periods per week should be adopted as the standard, providing that five of these periods be given to unprepared work.

11. That parallel programmes should be identical in as many of their parts as possible.

12. That drawing should be largely employed in connection with most of the studies.

13. The omission of industrial and commercial subjects. This is mentioned without comment.

14. That more field work should be required for certain sciences.

15. The desirability of uniformity.—Not definitely recommended in the report.

16. That the function of the high schools should be to prepare for the duties of life as well as to fit for college.

17. That colleges and scientific schools should accept any one of the courses of study as preparation for admission.

18. That a good course in English should be required of all pupils entering college.

19. That many teachers should employ various means for better preparation, such as summer schools, special courses of instruction given by college professors, and instruction of school superintendents, principals of high schools, or specially equipped teachers.

20. That the colleges should take a larger interest in secondary and elementary schools.

21. That technological and professional schools should require for admission a complete secondary school education.

22. That each study pursued should be given continuous time adequate to securing from it good results.

The points of the Report which I should question are as follows:

1. That Latin should be begun much earlier than now. (This is a conference recommendation.)
2. That English should be given as much time as Latin. (Conference recommendation.)
3. The large number of subjects recommended, with loss of adequate time for each.
4. The omission of a careful analysis of the value of each subject, absolute and relative, preparatory to tabulating courses.
5. The apparent implication that the multiplying of courses is advisable.
6. The implication that the choice of subjects by the pupils may be a matter of comparative indifference,—the doctrine of equivalence of studies.
7. Some parts of the model programmes made by the committee.

The three criticisms most emphasized:

1. The lack of a bold and clear analysis of the value of subjects before correlating the recommendations of the conferences.
2. The implications that the Committee favored an extreme theory of equivalence of studies.
3. Practical details in the organization of the model courses.

The Committee of Ten has been criticised most unjustifiably in some respects. As one speaker said "The Committee has been reviled because it did not revise the decalogue." It was not commissioned to remodel the universe, but only to do a certain definite thing. More remains to be done, and they know it as well as any one. Nor will everyone agree with the report, which is essentially like any tariff bill,—a measure of compromises. But the work of the Committee has been unquestionably the great work of educational leadership of our day.

The cause of child study received a great impetus at the hand of its apostle, President G. Stanley Hall. His address on Thursday evening was certainly one of the events of the meeting. How well he was understood is another question. "Is that the Spencer who has been writing the articles in the *Universal Schoolmaster* on Grube's method?" innocently inquired one bright faced schoolmistress when Herbert Spencer was mentioned. Commissioner Harris made a strong impression by his admirable address

on "The Influence of the Higher Education of a Country Upon Its Elementary Schools."

THE DEPARTMENT OF SECONDARY EDUCATION

President Adams said at Albany that he had been forced to the conclusion that the East was growing provincial. That must have been the opinion of those who made out the programme of the department of secondary education. Dr. Huling was the only eastern schoolman on the programme. But the attendance justified the programme makers. Very few prominent eastern teachers were there. This may have been partly because the general meetings treated subjects of interest to secondary teachers. The programme was made up of good individual papers, some of which we expect to give to our readers in their entirety later. It was, however, rather too full, the meetings were too much prolonged, and discussion was not treated with proper respect. The first paper, "Is It True That the Most Effective Part of the Education in This Country Is That of Secondary Schools," (an unfortunate wording, we think) by Principal Charles P. Lynch, of Cleveland, rather took the affirmative of the question and brought out a storm of opposition. The department was showing temper, and Mr. Hull's, of Lawrenceville, wise and moderate words were most timely. W. Wilberforce Smith contended for the teaching of Latin as a required study, at state expense. Miss Haslup read a bright paper on "How May a Professional Spirit Be Acquired by the Teachers of the Secondary Schools of America." At the second meeting Dr. Huling paid a graceful tribute to the memory of John S. Crombie, and among other good papers J. Remsen Bishop had a timely one on "The Future of the American High School and How It May Advance Patriotism," really two subjects, and treated as such. Dr. Amelia Earle Trant, the acting president, showed how admirable a presiding officer a woman may be. The first day's meeting was largely attended; the second poorly. Officers for next year are: President, Principal W. H. Smiley, Denver High school; Vice President, Miss H. L. Keeler, Central High school, Cleveland, O.; Secretary, Principal C. H. Thurber, Colgate academy.

C. H. T.